

Message Text

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S E C R E T MANILA 10075

EA ONLY

FOR EA OAKLEY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, RP
SUBJECT: SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO POSITIVE GOP STEPS IN THE
HUMAN RIGHTS AREA

1. SUMMARY. RECENT FAVORABLE MOVEMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES
HUMAN RIGHTS AREA SUGGESTS DESIRABILITY OF SOME EARLY
POSITIVE GESTURE FROM OUR SIDE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN MY OPINION THERE HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT FORWARD MOVE-
MENT IN THE PHILIPPINES HUMAN RIGHTS AREA IN RECENT WEEKS.
DESPITE OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THE ELECTION CONTROVERSIES,
MARCOS HAS EVIDENTLY DECIDED TO SEEK SOME MEASURE OF
RECONCILIATION WITH OPPOSITIONIST ELEMENTS. WE CAN ONLY
SPECULATE WHY HE HAS DONE THIS. IN PART I SUSPECT IT IS A
GESTURE TO U.S. OPINION, PROMPTED BY THE FORCEFUL PRESENTA-
TION OF U.S. VIEWS BY THE VICE PRESIDENT AND OTHERS. THE
SURPRISINGLY STRONG SHOWING OF LABAN IN THE ELECTIONS MAY
BE ANOTHER REASON. I ASSUME HE MAY HAVE OTHER DOMESTIC
REASONS WHICH HE IS KEEPING TO HIMSELF FOR BEING READY TO
WORK OUT SOME NEW ACCOMMODATION WITH HIS CRITICS.

3. IN ANY CASE A GOVERNMENT-OPPOSITIONIST DIALOG HAS BEEN
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SET IN MOTION, AND OUT OF THIS PROCESS HAS COME SEVERAL
POSITIVE STEPS:

A) THE DROPPING OF CHARGES AGAINST THE 606 APRIL 9 DEMON-
STRATORS AND THE RELEASE OF THE FINAL SIX PERSONS DETAINED
IN THIS CONNECTION;

B) ORDERED RELEASE OF THE EIGHT REMAINING DETAINEES ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN THE OSMENA PRESIDENTIAL ASSASSINATION PLOT;

C) WIDENING OF AMNESTY COVERAGE AND THE DECREED AMNESTY OF 631 PERSONS DETAINED FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND OTHER CRIMES;

D) DISCUSSIONS WHICH MAY LEAD TO AQUINO'S EARLY RELEASE AND EXILE;

F) MARCOS' STATED INTENTION TO TERMINATE MILITARY TRIBUNAL

4. WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN THIS AREA THE PRESIDENT'S JUNE 12 RESTRAINT IN DISCUSSING THE LIFTING OF MARTIAL LAW AND THE HOLDING OF LOCAL ELECTIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, SIGNAL CONTINUATION OF THE CUSTOMARY MARCOS CAUTION AS HE MOVES TOWARD HIS VERSION OF "NORMALIZATION." NONETHELESS THERE ARE GROUNDS TO HOPE THAT HE WILL CONTINUE IN MEASURED FASHION, TO BUILD ON HIS MORE CONSTRUCTIVE RECORD OF THE LAST FEW WEEKS.

5. IT STRIKES ME, THEREFORE, THAT THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO OFFER A CARROT OR TWO, BY MAKING SOME POSITIVE AND TANGIBLE RESPONSE TO THESE WELCOME DEVELOPMENTS. ONE POSSIBILITY THAT COMES TO MIND WOULD BE TO BREAK LOOSE THE LONG PENDING EXPORT LICENSE FOR AMMUNITION MANUFACTURING
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PLANT PARTS (SQUIRES-BINGHAM). ANOTHER WOULD BE TO MOVE FROM ABSTENTION TO FAVORABLE VOTES ON UPCOMING IFI LOANS WITH QUESTIONABLE BHN CONTENT. ALSO WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR CONSIDERING A FURTHER MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TAKING NOTE OF THE STEPS LISTED IN PARA 3. YOU RECALL THAT I MADE A SIMILAR POINT ORALLY TO MARCOS AS COMING FROM CARTER IN MY JUNE 8 MEETING (STATE 143928). I RECOGNIZE WE MUST NOT OVERUSE THE PRESIDENT-TO-PRESIDENT CHANNEL ALTHOUGH I GATHER MARCOS IS ESPECIALLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO SUCH FLATTERY.

6. TO GET THE MOST MILEAGE, WHATEVER RESPONSE WE MAKE SHOULD NOT, I BELIEVE, AWAIT AND BE PEGGED TO A FAVORABLE RESOLUTION OF THE AQUINO CASE. MURPHY

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